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ABSTRACT

This document provides abstracts of papers prepared by the staff of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees for circulation to the trustees. The papers fall into three main categories: staff utilization, policy analyses of administrative and financial matters, and relations between laymen and professionals. Topics of the occasional papers cover pupil-teacher ratios, community involvement, teacher retirement, large school systems, differentiated staffing, accountability, policy making, the role of the school administrator, educational finance, educational data processing, teacher turnover, and the improvement of teacher education. Miscellaneous papers cover school district reorganization in Canada, a rationale for differentiated staffing, organizational effectiveness in education, and a study of the political socialization of the young. (MJM)

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OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 17

These occasional papers are prepared by the staff of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees for circulation to trustees. They are not policy statements, but background papers for trustees, to assist them in making policy decisions by providing data and opinions on educational developments in Manitoba and elsewhere which seem relevant to the concerns of trustees.

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ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS AVAILABLE FROM THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF THE MANITOBA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

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School District Reorganization in Canada: The Next Decade

A Rationale for Differentiated Staffing (Reprinted from Interchange, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1971.)

Organizational effectiveness in Education: Its Measurement and Enhancement (Reprinted from Interchange, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1972)

How Do Ideologues Get That Way? A Study of the Political Socialization of the Young (Reprinted from the Journal of Educational Administration, in press)

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this compilation is to provide a quick guide to the materials available from the Educational Services Department of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees. The abstracts provided here may be quite adequate for some readers, with only a passing interest in the papers or topics abstracted. In many instances, the volume of reading material which faces trustees and senior administrators makes it imperative that they have access to abstracts, and it is with this in view that this set of abstracts was prepared.

Some readers may however, wish to obtain the complete paper or papers from which the abstract is taken, if they have a more extensive interest in the topic. The papers are available, free of charge, from the address on the cover of this document.

Most of these papers, as can be seen by the titles listed on the contents page which follows, concern themselves with topics of particular interest to trustees. Generally speaking, the papers fall into three main categories, staff utilization and development; policy analyses of administrative and financial matters; and relations between laymen and professionals.

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 5

PUPIL-TEACHER RATIOS AND THE USE OF RESEARCH FINDINGS IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY-MAKING

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the question of what role educational research should play in educational policy-making, and particularly with regard to pupil-teacher ratios. Teachers and their associations argue for a reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio on the basis that such a move would improve instruction. It might well improve teaching from the teachers' point of view, however it is of questionable benefit to the students. On the other hand, government and school boards argue that the cost of even a small reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio is so very costly that unless the benefits of such a change are obvious, it is not worth the additional cost.

A section of the paper also deals with the question of what role research should play in educational policy-making. A general rule here is that research findings should be considered an appropriate guide to policy-making when they are clear and consistent.

Research is generally consistent in finding that a reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio has little effect on student learning. The paper reviews recent studies in regard to the above finding. However despite these findings, policy-makers have not acknowledged this to be the case, and the trend seems to be to reduce pupil-teacher ratios.

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 6

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION: SOME DEFINITIONS, OPINIONS AND TECHNIQUES

ABSTRACT

This paper provides a view of community involvement in education and deals specifically with the topics of local control and accountability, essential aspects of community involvement. Definitions of accountability and local control found in the paper provide the basis of a definition for community involvement, which might mean establishing provisions for such community activities as lay participation in decision-making at all levels of administration in education, the eliciting of advice and opinions on various topics concerning schools and education, and the acceptance of responsibility for some aspects of education, by such means as volunteer work in the schools.

The paper goes on to suggest specific techniques for allowing and encouraging community involvement. These techniques include school-community committees, the use of surveys of opinion, and of telephone surveys. These techniques contribute to local control and accountability and as such are important to the realization of community involvement in education.

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 7

THE FINANCIAL CASE FOR EARLY RETIREMENT OF TEACHERS

ABSTRACT

This paper points out that the Association has a policy favoring retirement at 60 for teachers. Resistance to this suggestion by the government has been primarily based on grounds of costs. However, the paper proceeds to demonstrate that the additional cost of retiring teachers at 60 is largely illusory. In fact, for some classes of teachers some economics are possible in overall expenditures, because high experience and high salary teachers can be replaced with low experience and low salary teachers, and also because early retirement causes some reduction in overall pension entitlement.

Thus the financial grounds for resisting early retirement seem dubious. Arguments in favor of early retirement, stated briefly here, and particularly the opportunity of placing current graduates from teacher training institutions, ought perhaps to be influential, given the weakness of the financial argument against early retirement.

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 8

THE PERILS OF BIGNESS:

THE CASE AGAINST LARGE SCHOOL SYSTEMS

ABSTRACT

This paper concerns itself with the topic of school system size, discussed from the point of view of costs and of community involvement. The first section describes findings of recent studies in three jurisdictions, Oregon, British Columbia, and Manitoba, regarding the relationship between size of the administrative component and size of the school system, and the relationship between school system size and unit costs. The findings for all three jurisdictions are similar: there exists a cost curve, in which costs decrease with increase in system enrollments to a certain optimal point. Beyond that point costs increase with increases in enrollment. The optimal point differs for the different jurisdictions. This section of the paper suggests the general conclusion that cost curves should be carefully considered in any proposal to amalgamate or consolidate school districts, since the likely outcome of amalgamations which produce new districts with larger than optimal enrollment is a significant increase in the unit costs of education.

The second section of the paper establishes some criteria for analyzing school systems, and suggests that with regard to the issue of bigness three important criteria are citizen participation in policy-making, program diversity to meet community needs, and flexibility in meeting pressures for innovation. Three case studies are briefly described concerning New York, Vancouver and Toronto. In general federation or regionalization proposals seem to be most popular at present, on the grounds that they offer that advantages of local policy-making and flexibility of programs, with the provision of some services by a central office to obtain economies of scale.

Thus from the point of view of cost control and also of providing diverse and flexible programs to suit community needs, consolidations beyond certain levels seem to be ill-advised. The optimal level of enrollment for a school district on the basis of costs, and the limitation of size necessary to achieve diverse services may well be quite small in some jurisdictions. But firm conclusions regarding optimum sizes for educational systems are not possible, in the absence of extensive empirical evidence.

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 9

A STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTING A DIFFERENTIATED STAFFING PROJECT IN A MANITOBA SCHOOL DIVISION

ABSTRACT

This paper commences by noting that differentiated staffing is an innovation in staff utilization which may provide better services for students than current utilization practices. The basic rationale for differentiated staffing has several elements: careers in teaching are relatively unattractive for men, in part because of the lack of a range of functions, and a significant mismatching of teacher competencies and talents with work assignments. Furthermore, by emphasizing collegial decision-making, and specialization of function, more effective teaching may become possible. Salary schedules can be adapted to offer incentives for maximizing contributions to the teaching program.

Differentiated staffing is a large scale innovation affecting many different aspects of the school system, including instructional and administrative dimensions. It relies heavily on group processes and group decision-making, and hence draws attention to the quality of the use of human resources in the school system. Training processes for differentiated staffing frequently involve training in group activities and decision-making, (organizational training).

The implementation of innovations generally can be considered as having six elements: 1. analysis of system needs; 2. proposal of a program of changes; 3. implementation after acceptance; 4. countering resistance to change; 5. maintaining changes by incentives; 6. evaluation of success. Consideration of the nature of differentiated staffing as an innovation, and of elements in implementation, suggests the following set of necessary steps in implementing a differentiated staffing project: 1. define purposes; 2. predict costs; 3. seek approval of the school board; 4. establish a budget; 5. establish a steering committee; 6. locate a project school and a control school; 7. identify or recruit key staff members; 8. develop appropriate subcommittees on such issues as goals, needs, job descriptions, assessment of staff, incentive schedules, and evaluation; 9. hire staff; 10. develop training programs; 11. carry out training; 12. accumulate materials; 13. open the school, one year after commencing the process. Only by such careful attention to the processess of implementation can an innovation such as differentiated staffing fulfill its promise.

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 10

AN ACCOUNTABILITY SCHEME FOR MANITOBA

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes an accountability scheme for Manitoba. The scheme is predicated on a systems view of the provincial education system which focuses on the elements of objectives, programs, and evaluation.

The early part of the paper suggests that accountability is necessary because education needs increased levels of commitment from both parents and the general public to increase its effectiveness, to counter current disenchantment regarding the economic value of education, and to ensure the provision of the 25% increase in expenditures probably needed by 1974-1975. This part also proposes the view that accountability consists of three main elements: evaluation, particularly of processes and of organizations comparatively; costs, and particularly the relation of costs to effectiveness, with reference to programs; and responsibilities to the client and to the general public. In this view an accountable educational system is one which provides proven educational programs at minimal costs, in response to clearly assessed needs, to the satisfaction of the clients and the general public.

The next section of the paper discusses the uses and development of organizational goals, at provincial, divisional, and school levels, and provides some guidelines for this process. The topic of program development and the location of responsibility for this, is next discussed, with some examples relating to cost-effectiveness calculations. The next section of the paper deals with the evaluation of educational systems. The basic nature of output measures, and of this type of evaluation, is explained, and an elaborate systems model for evaluating educational organizations is described based on output measures.

A full program of accountability necessarily includes extensive consultation with all interested parties, a full accounting to the general public, and the publication of extensive comparative data on the costs and effectiveness of programs, and may not yet be feasible.

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 11

POLICY-MAKING AT THE SCHOOL BOARD LEVEL

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to provide some perspectives on decision-making, on policy-making as a special class of decision-making, and on ways of distinguishing policy-making from administrative decision-making. The viewpoint adopted is generally that of the practicing administrator, although that of the policy-maker is not ignored. The paper is prescriptive rather than descriptive. The view of decision-making proposed is generally that of Simon. The characteristics of policy decisions are examined, and it is suggested that they are generally high in abstraction, broad in scope, and permanent in application; further, they tend to be concerned with the purposes of the organization, and the public interest. These characteristics provide the basis for distinguishing policy from administrative decisions.

The final section of the paper proposes a procedure for developing policy, based on the theory of decision-making and the characteristics of policy decisions presented in the earlier sections. The overall purpose of the paper is to assist in the improvement of the policy-making process, and the removel of some of the uncertainties about the boundaries between policy and administrative decisions, which are a potent source of friction between policy-makers and administrators.

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 12

THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

ABSTRACT

The paper suggests that there is currently a good deal of uncertainty over the role of the principal, which is frequently described as one of educational leadership. This notion seems obsolete. Currently, there are pressures on principals to substantially modify this role, and these pressures seem to push the principal towards the definition of his role as that of administrator. On the basis of the beliefs of those involved in training programs for educational administrators, it is possible to predict that the future role of the school principal will, in fact, be that of building or school administrator. The role can be defined as that of administrative leader, as opposed to instructional leader. Administrative leadership involves at least the following elements: purpose-defining for the organization; coordination of the work of specialists, including decision-making; and responsibility for external relationships. The paper concludes by pointing out that this redefinition of the role of the school administrator, or administrative leader, has significant implications for in-service training for administrators, and collective negotiations and affiliation with teacher associations.

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 13

CONTROLLING THE COSTS OF EDUCATION: A POLICY ANALYSIS

ABSTRACT

The basic assumption of this paper is that reductions in expenditures on education, brought about by government controls, are inevitable, and imminent. Four criteria for judging various alternatives are stated; these are equity, effectiveness, acceptability, and ease of implementation.

Five alternative proposals are suggested, but only one, that of reducing the length of the school program from twelve years to eleven or ten years, is examined in detail. The step from twelve to eleven years is relatively simple, with only minor extenstions of the school year and some juggling of curriculum being necessary. It has the potential of reducing operating costs by over 5%, and capital costs by an undetermined amount.

This alternative, although certain to be strongly resisted at first by various interest groups, seems to meet the criteria stated above rather more satisfactorily than others proposed. If reductions in expenditures are imperative, then this may be the best method available.

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 14

EDUCATIONAL DATA PROCESSING IN MANITOBA: A STATUS REPORT

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the current status of educational data processing in Manitoba, using data collected by the Planning and Research Division of the Department of Youth & Education in July, 1971.

The data shows that the current utilization, priorities, and preferences for department services all emphasize payroll and accounting operations, rather than educational operations such as scheduling, student reports, attendance records, or accumulative records.

Thus the Manitoba situation parallels Canada wide trends in the utilization of data processing services. The future priorities of Manitoba school divisions and districts suggests no shift in the major pattern of development of data processing services in education in the province.

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 15

TEACHER TURNOVER

IN SCHOOL DIVISIONS AND DISTRICTS IN MANITOBA, 1971-72

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of a survey of teacher turnover in Manitoba's unitary school divisions and school districts, and draws a number of conclusions from the data presented. First, with regard to turnover, the figures suggest that teacher turnover in general is not dropping as rapidly as many people believed. With regard to the motivations for teacher turnover, the data shows clearly that tenured teachers generally resign from administrative units, rather than being released. The teachers released are probationary teachers: the releases of probationary teachers outnumber the releases of tenured teachers by 7 to 1. Unless it can be assumed that virtually all tenured teachers are highly competent, this seems an unsatisfactory situation

Together with current projections on pupil enrollment and teacher employment, which suggest a serious shrinkage over the next decade, one general conclusion drawn from the data is that the tenure regulations, which tend to inhibit school boards from releasing tenured teachers, are effectively preventing the permanent employment of new graduates. Because of the difficulty of releasing tenured teachers, probationary teachers are likely to be released despite their competence, in a period of shrinking employment of teaching staff. However, it does not appear that the tenure provisions of the Public Schools Act are themselves to blame, since they have been tested relatively few times in the last 5 years, and with results which are probably neutral. In effect, the best conclusion seems to be that the provisions of the Act may be satisfactory, but that senior administrators are reluctant to undertake the careful presentation of a case which is necessary in semi-legal proceedings.

In general, then, this data suggests that the teacher workforce of the province is less effective than it might be, and is likely to have lower levels of recruitment of new graduates than many people (including new graduates) might think desirable.

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 16

THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN MANITOBA

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the external factors which seem likely to have a substantial impact on teacher training programs in Canada and the United States, and the current state of opinion with regard to teacher training programs. The most important factors are as follows: the probable oversupply of teachers suggests that in future teacher training institutions should increasingly be concerned with retraining, or in-service training, as opposed to pre-service training. In this way, the institution can help to improve the level of competence of practicing teachers. Additionally, they may also assist in such activities as teacher evaluation, and innovative practices or methods. In general such activities might also assist in improving the cost-effectiveness of education.

Despite some emphases on the need for change amongst, for example, school trustees' associations, recent opionion surveys of senior members of faculties of education in Canada suggest little committment to change. Certainly, little change is seen as imminent in Canada. In the United States there seems similarly to be relatively few changes taking place, although a great deal of research activity has been carried on, and a few individuals and institutions are actively pressing for change.

An examination of some possible new directions in teacher education suggests that the work of MacDonald, which proposed a series of important principles for teacher education programs in future, has in fact been accepted in practice in the United States although not in Canada. MacDonald suggests, amongst other things, that teacher education programs should be based on a "thorough analysis of teaching as a task", and that teacher education must include "provision for the measurement of performance following training". The provision of adequate research models on which to base new programs in teacher education seems not to be the problem, since recent research on teaching has been a good deal more successful than early research, and some at least of the behavioral characteristics of effective teachers have been identified. Furthermore, ways in which teachers can be trained to heighten their effectiveness have also been identified. This research has not yet had a great impact on teacher training.

SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION IN CANADA: THE NEXT DECADE

ABSTRACT

Although a good deal of school district reorganization has recently taken place the continuing strength of desires for equality of educational opportunity, the current definition of the concept, and the evidence of existing inequalities, all suggest further school district reorganization will take place in Canada, with the expectation that such reorganization will help to equalize opportunity.

Regional provision of educational services has some distinct advantages for small/or rural districts, both in extending availability of programs and controlling costs. The history of school district reorganization suggests that these concerns are likely to be decisive in determining the direction of change. This change can also be seen as part of a distinct move away from community educational systems, operated by and for the local community, to educational systems which are local subdivisions of a national system. This in turn suggests some probable modification of the nature and purposes of local school boards, as exemplifications of the principal of local control.

The development of regional school districts, operating on a cooperative shared-services basis to improve the availability of sophisticated educational services, needed to prepare students for work in a mobile, specialized, workforce, and life in a society defined nationally as opposed to a community defined locally, seems imminent in Canada.

A RATIONALE FOR DIFFERENTIATED STAFFING

(Reprinted from Interchange, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1971)

ABSTRACT

The improvement of staff utilization through the technique of differentiated staffing is the subject of this paper. The authors bring together the various definitions of the term "differentiated staffing" and propose a more inclusive definition. Drawing from the literature in organizational change, the authors document in a logical and systematic manner the parameters of differentiated staffing and the problems that are likely to be associated with its introduction. The major part of the paper analyzes the potential of differentiated staffing for improving many deficiencies that are apparent in present methods of utilizing professional personnel in the public schools and in the decision-making procedures of those organizations. The authors urge controlled and systematic pilot projects be undertaken before large-scale or even system-wide adoption.

ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN EDUCATION: ITS MEASUREMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

(Reprinted from Interchange, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1972)

ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with the nature of organizational goals, and ways of measuring goal achievement. It is intended to provide administrators with some new ways of conceptualizing the evaluation of effectiveness in educational systems. The paper points out the desirability of involving professionals in the setting of goals, proposes a three-tier system of goals for educational systems, and suggests some of the reasons for the frequent failure to achieve organizational goals. Additionally, a comprehensive approach to the goals of organizations, adapted from Gross's "matrix of purposes," is proposed, on the grounds that only such an inclusive approach to organizational goals is entirely satisfactory. Finally, the paper takes issue with the notion that freedom for organization members equals absence of organizational controls. The sense of power for organization members increases with participation in control, as does effectiveness. Thus, particularly for organizations with large numbers of professionals as members, it is not absence of control but rather participation in control that is the vital factor in both freedom and effectiveness. The final conclusion of the paper is that attempts to improve the effectiveness of educational systems or institutions must be in the future more inclusive, and that the "matrix of purposes" approach is one possible line of development.

HOW DO IDEOLOGUES GET THAT WAY?

A STUDY OF THE POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION OF THE YOUNG

(Reprinted from Journal of Educational Administration, in press)

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to identify the important elements in socialization which help to account for the existence of the class of political sophisticates and actives known as ideologues. To a large extent, the continuity and stability of our political institutions depends upon these people, and thus it seems desirable to further our knowledge of how they are developed. In general, early studies emphasized the early development of such characteristics as political participation, political orientation, and authoritarian versus democratic tendencies.

Recent work on the political socialization of children has demonstrated that children do in fact differentiate themselves early in terms of their interest in or participation in politics. Thus it is maintained that a group of potential ideologues can be identified before children reach the age of 13 years. Since one of the characteristics of ideologues is independence of party, it is the development of such independence in children which is of particular interest here. This seems to be associated with upper socioeconomic status. Similarly, some children shift their attention from personalities to issues; these too form part of the cohort of potential ideologues.

The main lines of political socialization seem now relatively clear. Somewhat less clear is the relationship between socialization and the development of ideologues, but reasonable hypotheses seem to be available, and await empirical test, probably in the form of a longitudinal study. However, the attempt to develop a suitable theory of cognitive development, which can help to account for the differentiation into potential ideologues and potential followers is much more difficult. The concept of cognitive maturity, defined as early adoption of the mode of symbolic representation, can be seen as a mediating structure between political behavior and some of the characteristics of ideologues. If the school is seen as a sorting device, which differentiates students on the basis of levels of capacity to act in accord with social values, and id the bais is cognitive maturity, then it is possible that this is also the basis on which dhildren are sorted into potential ideologues, and potential followers.